

The Ancient Mysteries

By Andrew Linnell

Long before humans began to write, great teachers in the Mystery Centers taught select students about profound mysteries. These teachers had once been students themselves, chosen based on their bloodline or their aura or both, in some cases. Such teachers could perceive the glow around an individual, and this aura would indicate who had the moral disposition to undertake the dangerous journey of initiation ahead and would remain reliable throughout.

Students would start out with study and chores, and since no one could read or write, all study was done through oral communication. Eventually a student would be deemed ready for initiation, which took place within the Holy of the Holies: a sacred room deep within the local religion's temple. The high priest, or *hierophant*, then placed the prepared student in a near-death state; to any uninitiated observer, the student was dead, and their body would lay there in the Holy of the Holies for three and a third days. Now free of the physical body, the student could experience and explore the spiritual world with the guidance of the hierophant, and after the three days were done, the student would be called back to his body. This experience was so profound that the newly initiated mystic could no longer go by his or her old name. He had become born again, a new person. For him, his old self had died. Typically the new name came from his experience in the spiritual world. We find this taking of a new name after initiation occurring in all cultures everywhere in the ancient world, and remnants of this practice continue into modern times when, for example, a cardinal is promoted to become the new pope.

A long line of ancestors handed down the practices carried out in the Mystery Centers. Legends claim their sources lay in the moving stars where the ancestors were taught and then brought the wisdom and practices to the people. Because there was only an oral tradition for many centuries, no mention of these sources is found in historical documents. Plato spoke of long ago when the center of culture was in Atlantis; "it may be here that the Mysteries arose. A water catastrophe is said to have brought an end to the Atlantean Age—perhaps this is recorded in the Bible as the Flood. Noah and his seven sons rode out the flood in an ark, and when they landed, the world had greatly changed, the first rainbow was experienced. Rudolf Steiner, through his reading of the Akashic Record, has shown that Noah and his sons came to live and restart civilization in India where they were known as Manu and the seven Holy Rishis."ⁱ The Atlantean Mystery wisdom went with them. Since that time, one stream of civilization has steadily marched westward through Persia, Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Europe, and to America, perhaps in search of Atlantis. Each of these civilizations achieved something for the advancement of humanity, and the Mysteries helped prepare humanity for each cultural wave.

An individual could be initiated into not just the Mysteries of the local religion, but to several others at the same time. While each local religion had public rituals in which participation was expected of every member of society (perhaps even mandatory), an initiate could wander the world to experience initiation into other Mysteries. When the Mysteries began to fade away during the 4th century, the most popular ones were the Greek Mysteries, so today, we know these best. The Greek Mystery schools include the Eleusinian, the Dionysian, the Orphic Mysteries, and many others. In addition, other Mysteries in other geographies had their books and knowledge, including the Egyptian Mysteries of Isis, the Persian Mysteries of Mithra, and from Phrygia, the cult of Cybele.

Nothing was written down until Aristotle sent Alexander out to establish Alexandrias (new cities with large learning libraries) throughout the known world in the 4th century, BCE. Aristotle knew that the ancient Mysteries were fading away, and that they could no longer fulfill their mission because crossing the threshold to the spiritual world was becoming increasingly difficult. Taking the place of the Mysteries was the evolving intellectual capability of each person. In ancient times, one experienced the gods active in nature; the Muse inspiring their poetry or an archangel streaming thoughts into their head. But by the 4th century BCE, the spiritual world had withdrawn so far that initiations within the Mystery Centers no longer reached deep into the spiritual world. The level of higher consciousness that could be attained was falling and intellectual capacity was taking its place in the human soul.



Giovanni di Stefano, *Hermes Trismegistus*, 1488. Siena Cathedral

This is really how things were in Ephesus, that when the pupil entered the portal of the Mysteries he was always reminded of the words:

Speak, O Man, and you reveal through yourself world genesis.

And when he departed the words were said to him in the other form:

World genesis is revealed through you, O Man, when you speak.

Rudolf Steiner

i Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*

ii Steiner, *At the Gates of Spiritual Science*, Lecture 11: The Post-Atlantean Cultural Epochs

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If you would like to submit an article for publication please submit by:
August 30
for our next issue

In this issue of *Illuminating Anthroposophy*, we focus on the mysteries. Our featured article is titled *Traces of the Mysteries in Modern Life* written by Bastiaan Baan. He has been a priest in the Christian Community for 34 years, is a widely traveled lecturer, and has written three books: *Old and New Mysteries - From Trials to Initiation*, *Lord of the Elements: Interweaving Christianity and Nature*, and *Ways to Christian Meditation*. Our second article is titled *The Ancient Mysteries*, written by Andrew Linnell. Andrew has been a student of anthroposophy for 35 years, and has a deep interest in the Ancient Mysteries and the role they play in the development of modern technology.

In a lecture titled *Old and New Methods of Initiation*, Rudolf Steiner contrasts the methods used in ancient and modern mysteries:

The essential aspect of all this, with regard to the spiritual evolution of mankind, is that in more ancient times the physical body was withdrawn from the element of spirit and soul. . . . Today our aspiration is not to withdraw the body but to draw out the spirit, by strengthening and enhancing our forces of spirit and soul. The opposite of what used to take place must happen now; now the spirit must be drawn out. No changes must be allowed to take place in the physical, bodily aspect. Since the fifteenth century the human being has been organized in such a way that changes in the physical body, of the kind that were customary in those of Mystery pupils, would denote a condition of sickness. It would be a pathological condition, which must not be allowed to come about in normal development. (Lecture 6, February 1922)

He goes on to say that in working with the mysteries in modern times, our path must be achieved more directly by means of developing soul and spirit, as described in his books *How to Know Higher Worlds* and *An Outline of Esoteric Science*.

Through your library book requests, we've noticed that many of you have an interest in the old and new mysteries. Inspired by this interest, we will be sending out an updated booklist, where we have added a number of new anthroposophical titles and more books on the mysteries, including Bastiaan Baan's titles mentioned above.

We enjoyed reading about your efforts in trying the *Structured Conversation* method of study featured in our last newsletter. Study helps strengthen the resolve to stay on the path and we encourage you to continue applying these practices. We've heard that some study groups here on the outside will also be taking up the *Structured Conversation* study. We would like to continue to hear how your group study efforts go for you.

Our hope in presenting this issue of *Illuminating Anthroposophy* is that you will be inspired through a deeper understanding of the ancient and modern mysteries. Each one of you studying this newsletter is a unique individual on his or her unique path to the spiritual foundation of all existence. Together we form a community.

Blessings on your path, Kathy Serafin

Illuminations

Thank you for your kindness and sacrifice in helping us prisoners gain consciousness of light. I have learned that once one's eyes become truly opened and light is within him, all things seen, heard, or experienced is filtered so through this light, and no good deed done nor bad goes unrewarded or punished. Not by the prisoner or guards, but by the newly awakened moral self, thereby ensuring karma its course and recognized the entire way. I have become conscious of my humanity, thank you. *Germaine, Tennessee Colony, TX*

Just like to say thank you all for sending me these two wonderful books. I really appreciate the trust you put in me to return them, that says a lot about your program. I have gained a lot of information and knowledge from them, thanks again. *Timothy, Victoria, VA*

I feel that by understanding the Ancient Mysteries and Esoteric traditions, I have discovered a divine link that connects all life, and a deeper understanding of the world around me - including the often called "supernatural" yet as natural as any other form of science. This has led me to have a new found respect for mankind as a whole, including myself. I have learned ways to master self control that have helped me stay out of trouble while in prison and am positive that the same skills will help me create a better future now that I am about to be free. Freedom is such a peculiar term, though, as through my studies I've felt freer while in prison than I ever did on the streets, due to a poor lifestyle. Thank you so much for illuminating my steps to greater understanding of what life can really be. *Gabriel, ChIPLEY, FL*

I have been blessed by a fellow practitioner with one of your uplifting newsletters. I've struggled for many years searching in hopes to find enlightenment to better myself, my outlook in life and to become beneficial to those who seek spiritual help as well. As I read your newsletters and read the very powerful responses others have given and that you've placed very loving care and trust into, it gives me a very deep sense of profound hope. I thank you humbly for your time and for this request as well as the significant importance to your program. *Thomas, Grovetown, GA*

Friend, I was glad to hear from you again, haven't heard from

me lately because my karma called for me to go to the hole. In 1979 I asked God to help me become pure in this life time. He keeps me fighting some problems to purify me. I'm learning to drop my ego! I was a million miles long until I asked to be purified. I've just about killed the monster but it's still there. *George, San Luis Obispo, CA*

I really appreciate this work you are doing. At one time I was a Christian minister and believe I had a well-rounded comprehension of theology. Yet, these past couple of years my study of anthroposophy and Rosicrucianism has helped me grasp even deeper spiritual truths. Truths that resonate deep within me, like light that has always been there, but is only now coming to the surface. It is much more fulfilling than the bitter philosophy I used to try to force feed myself. *Jonathon, Pendleton, IN*

This path has opened up an immense sea of knowledge and dreams that inflame my motivation to find the interpretation, it's just difficult to express once enlightened. Here in prison, ignorance abounds so one is looked upon as crazy, as that label has been applied for ages to those who seek wisdom and find the path, never to return to the mundane complacency or mundane rewards or pleasures. Unfortunately for many, it's easier to find complacency and temporal pleasure in riches, sex, drugs, alcohol, etc. instead of climbing to the apex and preparing for our transcendence. *Felipe, Corcoran, CA*

It is very hard for me to even try to meditate. I am in prison for something that I did not do, on the very edge of losing the only two people that ever showed me true love, and having lost so much in life, physically, mentally, and even spiritually, it is *very* hard for me *not* to think of anything else but the situation I am in and *try* to make it better from day to day. *George, Butner, NC*

Through the letters, inquiries and newsletters that I have received, I take it the Ministry is growing and growing. That is beautiful. It is incredible that when serving God in some way or form we receive something. It doesn't have to be material. When it is spiritual, inside of us something is happening, something is going on, and when that happens we want to keep on doing whatever it is in serving God. Thank you, I don't know you but I will never forget you. *Richard, Ft. Stockton, TX*

cont. on pg 6

TRACES OF THE MYSTERIES IN MODERN LIFE

By Bastiaan Baan

Although the mysteries are the best kept secret of ancient cultures, today one could fill a whole library with fragments of classic initiation. They all show a similar pattern in the sequence of experiences.

1. There is a first stage of preparation, creating the conditions for the spiritual path.
2. The candidate goes through a stage of purification, called catharsis – connected with trials.
3. The spiritual world opens in an experience of light, “photismos”.
4. Finally the newborn candidate, neophyte, reaches fulfillment of initiation, “telete”.

In my work of pastoral care, I gradually began to recognize that today, to a certain extent, many trials and crises in life show similarities with this classic pattern. Usually there is no hierophant, there are no strict rules, but life itself (as Rudolf Steiner expressed it several times) creates possibilities for elements of initiation. In his book, *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, in the chapter, *The Apocalypse of John*, Steiner even used the expression “Initiation of Mankind”. We all, whether we want it or not, are part of an initiation process that eventually leads us over the threshold of the spiritual world. The famous artist, Joseph Beuys, expressed this with the words, “in our times, the mysteries take place in the railway station”.

This is a completely different situation than the classic form of initiation. In ancient mysteries, initiation was realized for the “happy few”, a small number of privileged candidates. They had to follow the rules given by the hierophant. In fact, they were like wax in the hands of the guiding initiates. Because of the strict rules I wonder if they were happy at all. Perhaps because of all their trials they had to be the “unhappy few”? Since the beginning of Christianity this principle doesn't work anymore. In the first Christian initiation, the raising of Lazarus, Christ steps back from the crucial experience: “Lazarus has died. And I am glad for your sake that I was not there” (John 11:14-15).

Here is an example of a modern experience of initiation, in which this new situation is expressed clearly;

I found myself floating in a vast blue other dimension universe, out of the body. I felt like I was quite alone in this enormous cosmic blue universe. I had the feeling I could look and see on all sides, as if I had many eyes. I saw that below me was a sarcophagus, like the ones in the pyramids. I stayed calm and felt very well. But gradually I realized that the situation presented was a kind of invitation to descend into the coffin. Essential is that I felt an enormous dimension of FREEDOM and personal responsibility. I was the guide and the hierophant of myself. I was free to say no or yes...or let go....After some “time” I became curious. And suddenly I decided to let myself descend into the coffin. What was asked of me was a free choice, to take the risk to die, to be prepared to sacrifice my life. And that is what I did. I descended into the coffin with the idea it could be possible to die and disappear completely. But that is not what happened. When I entered the sarcophagus, I discovered that it had no bottom. I softly traveled through the coffin and entered into a warm and incredible sea of light that surrounded me on all sides. My first conscious reaction was something like, “Now I am sure, death does not exist. It is a transformation, coming home again. I saw the original sun behind the physical earth at midnight”.

In this powerful, modern experience of initiation one can easily recognize elements of the classic mysteries;

1. The candidate is somehow prepared for his experience, in this case through spiritual exercises.
2. There is a stage of trial, the possibility to die and to disappear completely.
3. Suddenly the spiritual world opens in an overwhelming experience of light. The expression, “seeing the sun at midnight” can even be found in the classic descriptions of initiation, for example Lucius Apuleius “*Metamorphoses*”.

New however, is that the ego does not disappear or surrender completely to a guide or guru. The person who went through the above mentioned experiences, concluded:

“I had the experience that my identity, seen as a drop felt strongly connected with the whole ocean of light, but did not dissolve, disappear in it. My identity seen as a drop did not dissolve in the ocean, as often written in old texts.”



Giotto (attrib.), *Stigmatization of St. Francis*, c. 1300, Basilica di San Francesco

What happens if old forms of initiation are used today? They still seem to be very powerful but the element of freedom is missing. Here is a description of an interrupted initiation experience that shows there are also side roads and wrong tracks – at least for people who develop a feeling of self-consciousness. This person describes an experience after having read one of the books of Ram Dass, a researcher in psychology who later in his life worked with consciousness altering chemicals – and eventually worked under the direction of his guru Neem Karoli Baba.

“As I read the book, *The Only Dance There Is*, (talks given by Ram Dass in 1970 and 1972), I felt myself held in an atmosphere that could be likened to being in a bubble. My daily world seemed distant and I felt a numb almost rubbery bliss. On reflection it was a smug feeling of easy enlightenment and knowing, but with a feeling of impotency in practical engagement. I was just following the author's thoughts.

After a few nights of completing the book I had a lucid dream experience. I became aware I had been led out of darkness into a room to stand in front of a figure; the door was behind the figure present. He was an older figure, wearing his grey/white hair long, and his robes loose. He was sitting cross-legged, however he was levitated, as there was no chair beneath him. I could sense a small dark being scurrying around this “guru” figure. It became evident it was this figure who had led me to this point. A message was transmitted one could say telepathically, I was told to look into the “guru's” eyes. The intensity of their crystal-like sky blue appearance, brilliant and dazzling, immediately began to have a compulsive action of drawing me in, like suctioning, almost becoming irresistible. As this began to draw me in I became immediately fearful and frightened and quickly bowed down my head into my lap's darkness to avert the “guru's” gaze. At first lamenting perhaps I had not been strong enough to face a great moment in my spiritual development! There was a feeling of anticlimax. I felt like I had failed to face something. However, the feeling after my resistance can be described as if the life-force of a sacrifice had got away from him.

When I relayed this to people who are heavily affiliated with eastern philosophy and its practices they deemed my decision to look away as a failing along my spiritual development. To this day I can still vividly see the “guru's” eyes, however they do not have the power. I strongly sense through the experience that in averting the gaze I managed to keep something which was trying to be taken away from me, rather than what was being promised by the figures as something that was going to be given to me.”

Although in this spiritual experience there is a powerful suggestion that emerges from the guru, the reader of the book – even without doing exercises - feels that this guru wants to take away her sense of self, indeed in order to disappear, “like a drop in the ocean”.

Apart from individual experiences like the above mentioned, nowadays there are collective experiences that are connected with either initiation or forms of a failed or partial initiation. Collectively we are losing the firm ground under our feet. Old solutions do not work anymore. Whereas in earlier times people could say, “Everything goes by itself” nowadays, usually “everything goes wrong by itself”. On a giant scale mankind is confronted with trials, in which the old solutions do not work anymore.

In this stage it is not realistic to say just, “Wait and see”. Don’t wait and see until you are overtaken by the trials of life and death. In my book, *Old and New Mysteries*, I make a plea for what I call “finger exercises” during life. The experience of initiation is essentially an experience of death, losing firm ground under the feet, losing all outer certainties, going through the eye of the needle, in the middle of life. Don’t wait until you lie on your death bed...The Art of Dying, *Ars Moriendi*, can be practiced each moment of your life. Death is only the “proof of the pudding”. It can be prepared in the daily trials of life. These trials were originally called, “water trial”, air trial”, “fire trial”. In “losing ground under the feet” the soul has to find its spiritual ground of existence.

Once, a person who lost all outer certainties – her husband left her unexpectedly, she lost her job and her money – heard an earnest inner voice speak when she woke up in the morning; “What do you want? Do you want to drown or swim?” In her despair she answered, “I want to swim”. Then the same voice said loudly, “Then do it!” With these powerful words she somehow received the strength to “swim” in the uncertainties of her life – and found her way back in managing a difficult situation.

What is called in the classic initiation a “water trial” can be experienced in our time as an appeal to develop our own forces, united with an unconditional trust in the spiritual world. When all outer certainties fall away, and this is what all of us will experience sooner or later, this is our opportunity to overcome the trials of life.

Apart from these trials, where life itself asks us to stand upright in the rapids of events, death plays a crucial role in initiation. In ancient mysteries, several people who went through an initiation even expressed this literally; “The mysteries are related to the future life and the situation of the human soul after death. The candidates experience the same as those who have died” (Plutarch).

In our time something similar can be said about millions of people, who go through a near-death experience. In North America at least 8 million people have gone through this experience. It is the most well known form of usually partial initiation, with the difference that it usually comes unprepared. The people who come back into “normal” life often have an extremely difficult time trying to integrate their near-death experience in everyday life. Once a man who tried to reintegrate after such an experience said, “I am the most happy and the most unhappy person on earth”. When someone asked him what he meant by this he explained, “I am the most happy

person because I know what death is in reality. I am the most unhappy person, because I can’t explain to anybody what I experienced. Nobody believes me”.

Numerous people today already have experiences on the threshold when they accompany people on their deathbed. In modern studies, the so-called “empathetic near-death experience” is often mentioned. In my work with organizations that try to help people through these experiences I met several people who developed the ability to accompany those who are dying “until the rainbow bridge”, an imagination of the bridge that connects and divides life and death.

A whole different chapter of “new clairvoyance” (a term that was already introduced by Rudolf Steiner in the year 1910) is the struggle of a whole generation of children and young people who experience the spiritual world in daily life. The “indigo children”, as they are called today, develop the capacity to see and hear what happens in other people and in other worlds. One can imagine that this is not just an interesting experience but a challenge and a trial. Several of these children feel the pain of their classmates when something in the physical or emotional realm is disturbed. Some of them develop strong presentiments or even precognition of coming events. I know that these different forms of new clairvoyance can only be partly compared with initiation, however they show elements that can be found in the experience of initiation.

The following description shows that there are - even in events that occur without any preparation - sometimes clear indications of an initiation. In this case the effects of the initiation show itself even physically. In the year 2002 a father and mother traveled with their 6 year old son from Belgium to Italy where they visited the church in Assisi where Saint Francis lived. The murals of the old church were by the famous painter, Giotto. The child stood before the painting of the stigmatization of Saint Francis and was fascinated. The image shows Saint Francis at the moment when he receives the stigmata, the wounds of Christ, in his hands, feet, and side.



After standing a long time before this image the parents and their son went back to the hotel. There the boy began to make a drawing. He drew the cross with Christ and next to the cross the Father God and also the sun weeping above the cross. For the first time in his life he used the color black. Next to the cross he drew the Mother of Christ and one soldier in black. Each day he went back to the church and looked anew at the painting of Saint Francis receiving the stigmata. Upon returning to the hotel he drew another soldier in black. Day after day this pattern continued until the last soldier standing at the grave at the bottom of the hill. When the drawing was complete the boy became ill. He was so seriously ill that his parents decided to travel back to Belgium. However, on their way back the situation of the child was so critical that in Luxemburg they had to visit a hospital. Here the doctors discovered that he had developed encephalitis. When the child died in the arms of his mother, there appeared in the palms of his hands, in his feet and at his side the marks of the stigmata. In these last days of his life he became acquainted with the most essential experience of Christ which reflected itself in the physical body when he died. This experience is at the same time a crucial stage in Christian initiation. This is one of the many expressions that show us how life itself can become an initiation.

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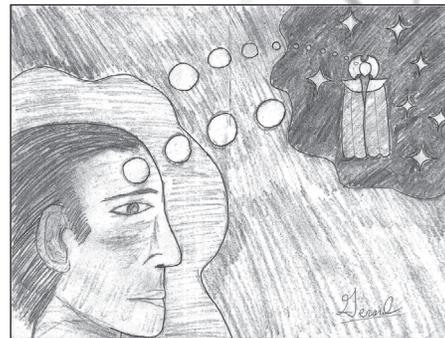
~ So What's Your Experience? ~

We welcome your comments on previous newsletter articles

Suggestions on Reading Rudolf Steiner – The Structured Conversation (Issue 22)

Your newsletter article on *The Structured Conversation* helped me tremendously! My study habits are developing well!
Gary, Crawfordville, FL

I've included a picture I drew using *The Structured Conversation* method of Jennifer Floyd Aulie from her article in the recent APO Newsletter. It's a picture I drew inspired by my studies of the first lecture of *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*. I'm a bit shy about drawing but I now realize the importance of forming an image of the thought we are meditating upon, and that externalizing it as a picture really does communicate it to our soul. I don't have the opportunity to do 'group study' but I've quickly applied the seven step approach to my studies of Mr. Steiner's work. Already, with this included lecture I've been able to more clearly understand his teachings than ever before. Often it isn't until I've encountered a subject in the *Self Awakening* studies that I fully grasp Mr. Steiner's meaning in something I have previously read in one of his books. Having used *The Structured Conversation* approach in my private study, I not only clearly understood the contents of the lecture but I experienced deeply what he described and even felt a bit of the enormous enthusiasm Mr. Steiner had. Thank you again for making the APO studies available to me. Carl, McAlester, OK



What New Ways of Thinking, Feeling, and Willing are you Applying?

MY MIND IS MORE CONNECTED to think in spirituality, my feeling is in cooperation with that, and my doings are more in accordance with my feeling and mind (harmony). At this stage of my anthroposophical journey, I really am a different person! In my thoughts, my feelings, my willing, my spirituality, my behavior, everywhere and everyone else, my love and compassion for others is in a very deep way. My fellows and officers told me that, I appreciate their comments; I accept them with a humble heart. It is thanks to APO. They look at me with respect and as an example for others. It is a great and honorable responsibility to be different for the better of others. It is a blessing for me to accept this task.
Eric, Powledge, TX

SOME OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL interpretations seem a mite dark and hard to grasp for me. But on the whole I understand the drift and I am rather feeling it. As a matter of course, further investigation of material will yield a deeper understanding and consequently, enlightenment.
Ronald, Waycross, GA

I AM THINKING on a higher plane of existence, which I feel brings me closer to my universal self, which then allows me to uplift my fellow human beings when I see them falling short. This is a great evolution in light of the individual I once was. Steve, Menard, IL

Meditations

I am currently working to establish a structured daily routine. I have been studying/meditating for a long time, and I have a firm understanding and I am disciplined, however, the physical disciplines elude me as of present and I strive even to conquer them. Eric, Bellefonte, PA

In meditation any form of focus works. Whether prayer, ritual, incantation, etc. They're all exercises that harness and direct the will. Arthur, Henning, TN

I believe that I can see higher worlds within my own mind when I meditate, my personal insight is different and I believe I am completely free and I am just trying to have that inner strength in my soul which I took myself through a total transformation. Also I know these spiritual beings work through all of us and give us the strength we need while we are asleep. Vurnis, Smyrna, DE

I found *Wilt Thou Be Made Whole?* very enlightening in that it gave me a fresh look into the healings given in the gospels, a view that I had not considered before. Taking these healings and using them in the meditation process not only helped me to understand the healings in the gospel, but also started me on the path to heal myself. Robin, Petersburg, VA

Through the exercises and meditation one comes to learn the essence of his true reason for existence, which is to fulfill the great work, given to him by the Creator. When there is life, there is hope. When there is hope, there is life, and this is a path we all should take heed to, for the life of this Maya world is nothing but play and amusement. I am really grateful for this

wonderful assistance in understanding and learning the realities of life. Chimeniem, Childress, TX

I found *Guidance in Esoteric Training* to be an excellent piece of work. While I do not use the exact working for the meditative exercises and mantras for each day, I do follow the structure set forth. I have incorporated each of the daily and monthly exercises into my morning sessions. I have made my Saturday night to Sunday night a time to reflect on not just my ideas, but as my ideas that lead me to success. This incorporates the Sun's influence for each week. Roger, Tabor City, NC

I've found true freedom in prison; all my self-perceived burdens have fallen away, I am learning how to shut my mind off to these negative forces through meditation. I have been in segregation for going on six consecutive years now. It has been the best thing that happened to me. When everything has been taken away the perfect path remains. I wish to use all my time in prison to prepare for my next incarnation and to balance out my karmic debts. My first outdate is not until 2041, I'll be 68. Daniel, Ionia, MI

The more I read anthroposophy, this gulf between topics I had assumed, was found to be nonexistent, and each topic has been linked, as if by crosspollination, illuminating the interconnectivity. Each lesson illuminating the next, lit from the torch of the one before. There is a meditation included on a seed within us and if you feel any struggle with impatience as Steiner cautions, do not let your failures deter you. Return to the text and you shall find the seed is being nurtured and the early lesson of reverence shall be rekindled. Domenic, Waynesburg, PA

Book Reviews

EARTH MOTHER

I've seen quite far
how grand you are

Each day since
my own birth.

It seems so wrong to
sing a song

Which simply calls you
earth.

Each time a bird is
felt or heard

Singing in the tree,

Or I humbly look on a
babbling brook

I weaken in the knees.

Your rolling farms oft
feel like arms

Protecting fertile seeds.

And in that ground
I have found

The answers to my needs.

Both mountain peaks and
valley creeks

Provide much needed rest.

Ad either would be
just as good

To suckle at your breast.

When I'm alone is
when I'm shown

That tingly sensation

When my subtle force
connects with Source

And raises my vibration.

I came from you,
as others do;

You were my earthly womb.

And when this shell has
served me well,

You'll be my earthly tomb.

When it's said and done,
you and I are one

With no need for another.

So with heart-felt pride from
deep inside,

I warmly call you...Mother!

Chris, Loretto, PA



Guidance in Esoteric Training Rudolf Steiner

This latest read was outstanding! *Guidance in Esoteric Training* is a good tool for reinforcing what one has picked up along this path while giving one yet much to ponder. The exercises contained within, while often difficult to complete in this environment, offer awesome ways which over time, teach one to consciously tune out things that would normally interfere with one's meditations. It also teaches us to see the good in everything, even evil itself. Were it not for the existence of evil, good would have nothing to strive against. Goodness and love wouldn't shine as they do and humanity would have no guiding light. Jason, Tennessee Colony, TX

An Introduction to Anthroposophy Francis Edmunds

Francis Edmunds is a master of taking his readers into the deepest meaning of anthroposophy in the book titled *An Introduction to Anthroposophy*. In learning the stages of initiation, the four elements, the threefold society, etc. one is able to penetrate into the question of "I Am". The book is essential for any anthroposophical student. Jason, Florence, CO

Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path Rudolf Steiner

In *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, Rudolf Steiner uses the first part to explain the differences between monism and dualism. The amount of information is enough to make anyone think long and hard about everything that Steiner has put into words. The second half shows how monism and dualism are perceived in everyday life, as well as how to relate to the human being in all of their facets. Robert, Bismarck, ND

The Secret Stream Rudolf Steiner

The Secret Stream gives a concise look at the beginning of the stream or as I had known it, as the current that was perpetuated by the chosen that had/have the ability to carry on the legacy of Christian Rosenkreutz and Rudolf Steiner, who brought this stream into the nineteenth century. This book identifies the two streams from the fake or charlatans who have tried to initiate the actual way of the Rosicrucian, who have traveled the actual path that was established and consecrated in the mysteries of the Christ here on this planet earth. This book was especially helpful. It was a continuation of my former studies in Rosicrucianism. I had also been a member of the ancient order of the Knights Templar. Al, Nelsonville, OH

Anthroposophy in Everyday Life Rudolf Steiner

Anthroposophy in Everyday Life is a progressive renewal of the ancient mysteries without repetitions that have failed in the past. This book teaches us how to be objective and much needed practical thinkers that are not controlled by what we want to believe, more so what we know is true through experience. The four temperaments describe to us that we display the characteristics of heredity, and with knowledge of how the four temperaments are manifested in our children, we can create a better picture of treatment options in their development. This book is a must read for those serious about true inner development. Jason, Florence, CO

Astronomy and Astrology Rudolf Steiner

This book of lectures indeed helps one to "find a relationship to the cosmos" as the subtitle suggests. I found most informative the portions touching on the Breathing of the Macrocosm in relation to the eighteen breaths per minute taken by man/woman, the microcosm, and how it relates to the approx. 25,920 cycles of the "great day". Very, very educational. Freddie, Menard, IL

Illuminations

cont. from pg 2

I received the Fall 2014 Newsletter (with included lecture) last night, thank you so much for sending it. It couldn't have come at a better time. I've been in solitary confinement for five days with nothing to read, no one to talk to, and I said to the universal source please send me a book. I didn't know that it would be made manifest as excerpt from a book written by Mr. Steiner. Life is truly magical in every way. Cruz, Jasper, FL

It's amazing what the prison outreach is doing for us prisoners. With your help and all the books and newsletters my life has changed for the better. I can't say how much the study of anthroposophy has meant to me. I am now a new person looking for enlightenment and wisdom. I can now integrate all my previous academic studies with spirituality and deep knowledge of myself and the cosmos. I have learned to forgive and love even those which I considered sent me to prison. Now prison is another experience in this life and helping me toward a path of a future more enlightened lies ahead. I now can observe myself, my fellow inmates, the officers and all nature with new eyes. I can see new things I didn't know existed. Colors, forms, sound, etc. are now more real to me. My own body, my subtle body, my soul and spiritual can feel them and able to know them, thank you. The books were difficult to understand at first, especially *The Fifth Gospel*, but after a third reading I finally came to at least understand part of it. It will take some more lives to understand all of it! And people here complain about receiving 10 or 15 years of sentence! No! Lives, many lives needed to

understand and be all we can be. Now, time has another meaning for me! Ruben, White Deer, PA

I cannot express in words the gift that you have given me nor the joy and peace that gift has brought. Not only do you reflect the love that the spirit freely gives onto those that need it dearly (us in prison), but you also are an extension of that spirit reaching out to us. You are appreciated and I hope that this card fills your heart with joy of the love we share in the spirit. I want you to know that you and the society have impacted me by showing love and delivering knowledge that I would otherwise not have had. May the spirit of God bless you all and the ministry you provide. Branden, Sneads, FL

Thank you for the use of your books and services you provided. I truly believe that peace can only be achieved through hard work and prayer. The hard work is studying to attain wisdom and prayer takes practice (for me anyway), not only to speak, but much more to listen. Charles, Henning, TN

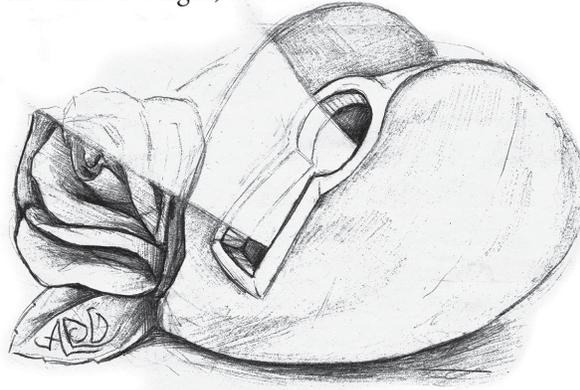
I enjoyed my time reading the books you sent. I find them to be very inspiring, which has me striving towards spiritual development. I hadn't any knowledge as to how strong of an element love consisted of, and now I have a better understanding of love. You all are providing us with an opportunity to learn of knowledge which is of the higher worlds. So I thank you. Shaka, Raiford, FL

Art and Poetry

I held the thought in my mind.
 And for ages it seemed I savored
 My intangible dream wave.
 I felt in my heart the story of me.
 A book with pages eternally and
 Words to decipher nonvisually.
 And what force kinetic had pushed
 Me so and seeds within were
 Sparked to grow
 And a hand was raised internally.
 "It's Will I am. It's Will I be."

Rashad, Trion, GA

Amid confusion, cloud covered nights,
 Enshrouded stars, obscured heights.
 Arid seclusion, shows a soul its color,
 The ennobled light, inside.



BJ, Corcoran, CA

A Light through the Darkest Days

A guiding light from
 an inspirational source
 your acts of kindness are
 an encouraging force.

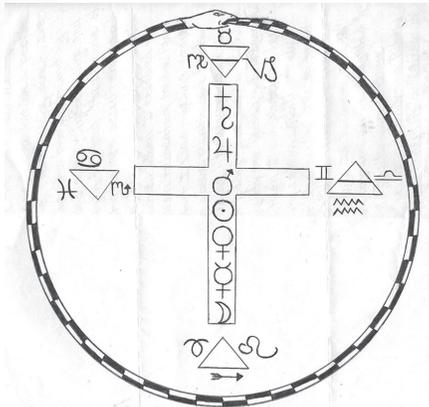
Through the darkest of
 days and torturous nights
 your kindness has shined
 in the brightest of lights.

A struggle, a battle
 I continue to ensue
 but with your
 inspirational kindness,
 my spirit's renewed.

A time and a place in a
 manner of ways
 my friend, to you my
 highest of praise.

My utmost and sincere
 thanks to all
 from within a cage a
 behind a wall.

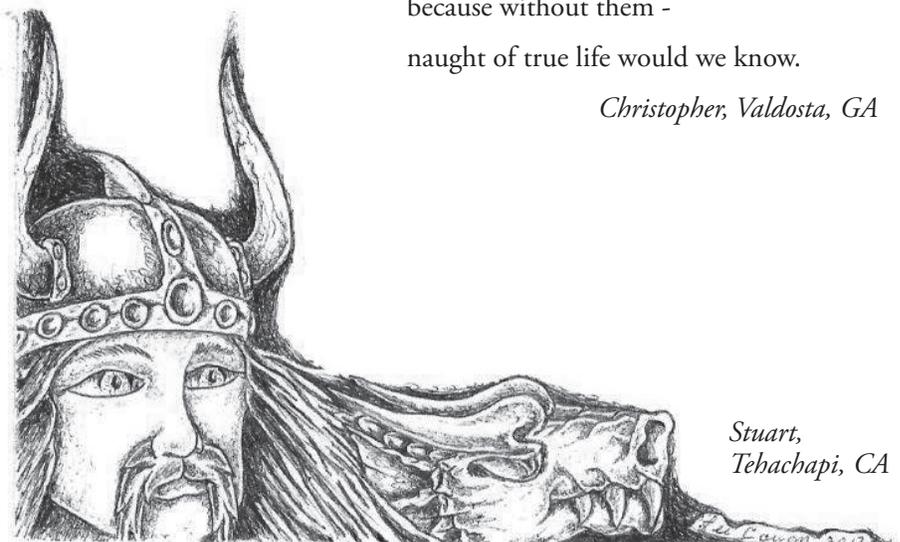
Jeremy, Lucasville, OH



Leonard, Amarillo, TX

Twelve senses there be,
 that we all have,
 yes - even you and me.
 Twelve senses that guide,
 Illuminate, and enhance our lives.
 Oh, how would it be, without these twelve,
 to let us taste and experience life?
 We would be but a shade of our true nature -
 Lost and miserable, void but for strife.
 So to those twelve senses, much do we owe,
 because without them -
 naught of true life would we know.

Christopher, Valdosta, GA



*Stuart,
Tebachapi, CA*

Inspired by your Reading

I really liked the book *Staying Connected*. It has truly assisted me in my endeavors of communicating with my love ones. It's one more thing that I'd like to add to aid others on their journey in such communication efforts. –Majority of my encounters come to me during my sleep. If a person is conscious enough to realize they are 'dreaming' then, upon such encounter just ask, "What does the dead want with the living?" For a while, I had only to communicate by body language and physical gesture which many times were complicated. Introverted meditation practices help with self awareness; develops greater self consciousness. *Ke'Ondra, Grady, AR*

The Great Initiates was concise, well-written, and very profound. I learned so much insight into all the Initiates before Christ and how the culmination of those before Christ laid the foundation for the Mystery of Golgotha. The explanations of IEVE, ELOHIM, and RUA ELOHIM AUR and the esoteric meanings behind them were phenomenal, and also most fascinating as Adam-Eve as creation of the Living Word! I am still traveling my path and experiences through the light of Anthroposophy. I gain new ideas and understanding more and more each day with meditation and reading these books. For that I thank you and the society with all of my heart! *Brandon, Sneads, FL*

After reading *Freemasonry and Ritual Work*, I am still slowly working through the different intros, but it held much promise. I have already learned of 'sacramentalization', of how life must become ritual. This small bit of teaching told me of so much potential. When I was young and searching to create my paradigms for life, I studied about multiple pagan beliefs, ritual magic, and for over twenty years the Native American path. This now shows me that I lacked ritual in my life, *sacramentalization*. But what I did was to look backwards in time for the missing pieces. I was somewhat, I guess you could say excited. I know now that my life and action can be ritual if I make them. Now I am beginning to think of the different areas of my life, like my art that I could make ritual and sacrament. *Jason, Holdenville, OK*

I found the study of the book *Genesis: Secrets of Creation* to be truly impregnated with meaning and power. I love the stages of human development up to the sixth day of creation, lecture 8. It really opened up all the book had spoken of from the beginning, it is a masterpiece. *John, Milton, FL*

Thank you for sending me *Anthroposophy in Everyday Life*. In the chapter "Practical Training in Thought" there are two things Rudolf Steiner mentions I wish to someday be able to do. First, to bring myself to a point at which logical reasons themselves possess a real significance for me. I must have the need to learn to love logic itself. Second, to train our thinking using the things of nature as objects to think about will make really practical thinkers of us. From the four chapters, I hope to gain a broader insight on humanity. I want to focus on the mysteries of life. More insight into self, and increase development into the spiritual realities. I want to change from the person I was before coming to prison. In short, I'm looking for a calmer, more productive, well-managed and narrow path of life. *Alexander, Huntsville, TX*

Thank you for the opportunity to read these books. They were a spiritually enlightened read. I felt as though the books were taking me on a journey to a deeper, more spiritual experience. If possible I would love to read more books that you have to further my learning. *Kion, Milton, FL*

The book *Theosophy* is a little more of an enigma to me still. It says man can only come to a true understanding of himself when he grasps clearly the significance of thinking within his being. Not trying to sound stupid but I've never paid a great deal of attention to my "being". I've never seen a need to observe how my actions affect my future or of those around me. I see now that like ripples from a stone tossed in a pond, each of our actions has an effect on the whole. I also see that by thinking we are led beyond our own lives into the larger world where experiences await us, Steiner says that: "The seeker of knowledge, when thinking, must always strive for that which is nobly beautiful and eternally true." Though I say that a man never reaches the truth as long as he gives himself up to the thoughts of his own self. *Joe, Tennessee Colony, TX*

I have always had an admiration for astronomy but only a rudimentary grasp on modern science's dissection of it, but Elisabeth Vreede redeems stargazing from the hollowed out shell materialism offers us for all their probing. And such seemingly unrelated titles, *Astronomy and Spiritual Science* and *Life beyond Death*, but never so with anthroposophy! I found insight on interesting passages between the life and death titles. For instance the incarnation of Buddha on Mars to dispel its warring nature. The astronomy title adds that it was Christian Rosenkretz that dispatched him. There is so many doors that open in anthroposophy that never exhausts itself (or me). *Domenic, Waynesburg, PA*

The Secret Stream was a great book. The depth in which Steiner speaks of the Rosicrucian path is great. It takes a little getting used to his vocabulary and dialect. I also enjoyed *The Knights Templar*, there were some good "prophesies" when he spoke about Sorat and his third "term" of 666 years starting 1998. One can see today how people live only for physical adornments and have no regard for spiritual aspects. *Bryce, Defuniak Springs, FL*

I especially enjoyed reading *The Bhagavad Gita and the West*. I learned so much by the commentaries of Rudolf Steiner, and all the explanations of who actually Krishna is. *Juan, Chino, CA*

Thank you so much for sending me these books, *Start Now* and *Rosicrucian Wisdom* highlighted events in my life I've questioned with an answer. I can now embark on this journey of self discovery with the help of APO that I may never have had the chance to otherwise, given the circumstances. Thank you for your love and support. *Daniel, Daytona Beach, FL*

I truly was impressed with *Anthroposophy*. Never have I read the evolution of the soul of man in such vivid detail. A lot of questions and theories "I myself" had already wondered to be true within my own spiritual intellect were confirmed, not only in *Anthroposophy* but also in his lectures in *Colour*. In each book, I was able to understand the truth of it more plainly and my part and the role set for me. Me being an artist of words and drawing and painting, I will never look at art the same, especially when it comes to *color*. Where I used to see the *colors* as pigments for my amusement and solely as tones to fill in the spaces of my drawings; I now understand the part that *color* plays in life in general; in the physical and spiritual realms, and in the pictures I paint by which through their energy brings the picture to life. "Joyful is the heart of the man whose spiritual findeth that truth that it longs for." I am truly glad that I was able to take such a profound journey through the soul science of anthroposophy and pray that I can continue to study the science of anthroposophy, and am willing to contribute to the advancement of the science. *Rodney, Huntsville, TX*

I've just finished another round of your wonderful books and *Understand Your Temperament* was my favorite. I have two brothers and a sister, and each one of us fit into one of the temperaments perfectly. I'm the choleric, my sister the melancholic youngest brother the phlegmatic, and the other brother difficultly sanguine. I really would like to thank you for providing this service to inmates. The books make you look at your life and the world around you from a very different point of view. *Samuel, Sneads, FL*

How to Know Higher Worlds was the first book I have had the pleasure of reading that dealt openly with initiation! This is something that I must go through when I am released from prison! I would like to undergo initiation and hopefully someday become adept. This is a long term goal I have. I think it is the only way for me to understand things that I know are real and exist, and will be the finishing touches to reveal the full potential I possess to be a better help to my fellow man. *Roby, North Wilksboro, NC*

I realize that the trials upon initiation that Mr. Steiner mentioned in *How to Know Higher Worlds* are now in effect. I now stand more courageous than before and I will emerge victoriously refined. I wish not to sound so cocky but I have to take a bold stand concerning my spiritual development, which I realize is a very serious matter that I have been taking lightly. Upon my first correspondence with you, I received information on spiritual practices that I perceived to be mundane so I disregarded them. But now after being further enlightened by Mr. Steiner's words in *How to Know Higher Worlds*, I can say from personal experience and application that these spiritual practices are deceptively simple and their simplicity may be the greatest force in their power. This has now inspired me to conduct an experiment of my own, which may offer me the opportunity to experience my spiritual strength. It's just a theory inspired by my spiritual research (which I need more info on this subject) but my main concern is not the success or failure but rather the process and opportunity to exercise my spiritual strength with positive activity through conscious effort and intentions. *Torrance, Perry, FL*

I thank you for the books, *Esoteric Christianity* and *Paths of the Christian Mysteries*, very informative. Steiner was truly on the path. I enjoyed them both. It seems the insight into the ancient mysteries seems universal, and one can only truly find differences in the initiation to be cultural. My holes and gaps are beginning to be filled. Most of the Norse teachings have been lost or destroyed so as Odin instructed, seek everywhere. Travel all roads. *Kenneth, Milton, FL*

In *Our Twelve Senses* I was amazed at how the author related the twelve senses with the zodiac signs; Albert Soesman is very knowledgeable. *Anthroposophy* is way more insightful and knowledgeable than I initially thought. From *How to Know Higher Worlds* and really, all of these books, I realize that anthroposophy is about seeing the invisible. I'm getting a better understanding and a deeper interest in anthroposophy. *Artic, Grady, AR*

SELF AWAKENINGS

EduCareDo Correspondence Course Response Summaries

Lesson 1: Introduction

What I've read in this lesson helped me make connections to the stuff I've learned from what I've read, this has helped me come up with: *The path of the evolution of the soul's connectiveness within the harmony of the cosmos.* This path could help us humans understand and control our human spiritual essence, so we can make a structured guidance system, to where we humans would be able to control or guide how we feel the future of the human/spirit/soul's evolution should be. By changing the realities of the existence in the future of our presence in the cosmos, by being able to alter the cycles of the souls within each evolutionary epoch, so we can design our vessels for the positive. Note: If this is attainable, then it wouldn't be too hard for the possibility for this process to be used to recreate the past, and our past evolutions and epochs. Aren't the possibilities of the mind grand?
Shawn, Bismarck, ND

Lesson 2: First steps in the Light on the Path

The thing that was most new to me was the fact that I found nothing that I could consciously discard, nor would I want to, yet the overall meaning that I gather from this formative lesson, is to know thy self and understand our purpose for living, and utilize these gifts for the betterment of the world. What was most important and closest to my heart is the fact that there's so much work to be done, yet so little time and very few people up for the task, before our time expires naturally, or by the hands of some dark new world order regime. I have lived a life of destruction and not caring about anyone or anything having to do with the God in me. Until one day I came to the realization that from love did I come into being, and in the same way I must approach life, and rebuild everything that I once wanted to completely destroy and had a lack of regard for.
William, Bridgeton, NJ

It was new understanding of the seven year cycles of growth with the law of attraction at play. I go back and graph out my seven yearly cycles overlapped with the nine yearly cycles of lessons and obstacles that set the stage of life in this waking world. That also goes with the people you run into against for purpose or growth—inner radiates outer and that's the type of people you attract. What was most important to me in this lesson was responsibility. That in itself is a word that some people have no meaning for—I learned at an early age. But being in prison, that word is far by few, being in a position of leadership—it's interesting that most people duck and blame others. No one ever says, *Ha! I messed up, I'm sorry. I'll take responsibility for my actions.* From now on I will lead by example. My actions speak louder than words.
Jason, Jonesville, VA

Lesson 3: Understanding, Caring, and Developing the Human Senses, Part 1

What was new was the realization that we do have, (and I do use, until now—some unknowingly) twelve senses. I appreciate Rudolf's clear identification and descriptions of the lesser known senses. I will be able to more keenly observe the people and events around me. I will use this to better evaluate the events around me, giving me more to discern with. Also, be better equipped to help my students and clients.
Steven, Lovetta, PA

Lesson 4: Understanding, Caring, and Developing the Human Senses, Part 2

This lesson introduced the upper, middle, and lower senses; how some of the lower senses are inner related with the middle senses, i.e. sense of taste and sense of smell, or the sense of movement related to willing. What I found as most important is that the upper senses are related to thinking, the middle senses are related to feeling. Sight and warmth are related, that they are both inner and outer senses. I can use this knowledge in improving my understanding of myself and with this understanding I can know others with a clarity previously unknown. I have embarked on a mystical journey that takes me on a quest to the mastery of the self.
Alan, Nelsonville, OH



Lesson 5: Watercolour Painting

Exercise 2: "How are these two different?" The blue picture: Blue being the color I had always called my favorite, this brought feelings of comfort and joy! I can actually *feel* it in my body! When I did it again with the yellow, the feelings in my body were a little different! Hard to describe, but it was as if I had entered into something different. Like expansion or exploration? I supposed it was trying something different. Anyway, I must work more with this lesson at home!
Bruce, Crawfordville, FL

Lesson 6: The Threefold Human Constitution and the Control of Thinking Exercise

I liked the trinity within everything that exists. We think we know a lot about what is around us but when we sit and think about it, we find out that we

didn't know a lot at all about it. I will take five minutes every day to improve my thinking; I want to increase my thinking capabilities and better control my emotions.
Derek, Reading, PA

Lesson 7: The Human Being in its Relationship to the World

The part of the lesson that was new was the plant and its polarities of contraction and expansion really attached itself to my consciousness. I want to learn a way to use this principle to manifest changes and to attain personal goals in my life. These lessons are packed with useful knowledge and new ways of looking at life and the nature of things. I'm beginning to live within the consciousness of personal change, and entering into the life of self-improvement. The whole concept of giving up something, contraction, in order to expand intrigues me. I will spend some time examining my part, present, and future to analyze it through the expansion-contraction-expansion process, to understand more deeply the process of metamorphoses of myself and other people, and the human race.
Tim, Winham, ME

Lesson 10: The Human Being, the Four Temperaments, the Four Elements...

The four temperaments and dominant elements were new to me. And to know that they all relate and coexist and knowing that we express ourselves (ego) through our temperament. What touched my heart was the experiment on controlling your feelings. I believe a lot of people struggle with that. I'm getting better but I'm still a work in progress. For it to be an experiment lets me know I'm not alone. I will continue work on controlling my feelings, good and bad. Sometimes good feelings can be overwhelming, not just the bad, as feelings affect your thoughts.
Tamika, Ypsilanti, MI

Lesson 11: Elements, Ethers, and their Origins and their Evolution on Earth

Most of this was new to me; Eurhythmy, considerations by tone, form. I learned most importantly about the Zodiacal correlation and the planetary origin of consonants and vowels. I've been studying sound, speech, and creative word for many years, this gives another facet to consider.
Sean, Eloy, AZ

Lesson 12: Experiments with Elements, Ethers, and their Effects in Nature ... Part 1

This lesson taught how the rhythm and vortices of the waves manifest themselves in nature and humans and how water accepts cosmic life-building forces, elements, and wisdom. I particularly liked how the relationship of moving water and surrounding air is that we take eighteen breaths a minute with seventy-two pulse beats and how the propagation of sound is 1:4.
Reginald, Lake City, FL

Lesson 13: Experiments with Elements, Ethers, and their Effects in Nature ... Part 2

I was really hit hard by the concept of how beautiful the world around us really is and only through the perspective of light can we truly experience the joys that earth has to visually offer. I will live within every living experience as I journey through this lifetime seeking to get all I can out of everything I do. Even as an incarcerated individual, I must take the small things I can experience and live within them on this journey. The universe reveals itself to us in one of the most commonly understood ways; through light. It is a pure joy to be able to visually experience the world and to grasp the concept of how light can only be manifested through and by way of color and darkness. The things we tend to ignore on a daily basis as natural processes can be the most enlightening experiences if we were just to look more in depth to the how and why of these common occurrences. Our natural senses reveal to us God.
Steven, Menard, IL

In this lesson I learned about how colors will appear on the border of objects where light meets darkness, and darkness meets light. I did the exercises where I stared at the colors and then stared at the X. It was fascinating to see what happens is real. I've seen things like that before in everyday life but didn't realize what was happening. Now I can focus on colors more closely than I have before.
Colleen, Ypsilanti, MI

Lesson 15: Female and Male Spirituality, Part 1

What was really new to me in this lesson is the process in which male and female evolved and separated from Adam. I understood the base concept for years but never had I been introduced to a more clear representation than this. What is most important to me is the clear relationship of both male and female roles in our lives. I mean we complete each other on every level. All of our negatives are made up by the opposite gender's positives. What I can do with this finding is to continue to educate myself in preparation for more understanding. What I have done is explained to people the relationship of the female to the male, in the best way I know how. The female is not the subordinate to the male, but in many ways, the superior.
Robert, Huntsville, TX

- STEPPING ONTO THE PATH -

I'M LOOKING TO FIND deeper spiritual meaning in life, to gain power from the experiences in life. To develop wisdom, knowledge, courage, and inner peace! I need inner peace, and I believe APO will really help me achieve this. I became a heroin addict approx. 6 years ago. So I really haven't done much in the past 6 years. Before my addiction I enjoyed nature, hunting, fishing, and hiking. *Jesse, Centerville, TN*

I WANT TO LEARN many things - to learn more about Rosicrucian philosophy and their methods to attain soul enlightenment. To be free of the inner disease that lies within my mind. I am my own worst enemy and I would like, or should I say, I am going to escape that hell in my life. I hope through reading and learning that I may be able to properly vocally express to others the wisdom that I have learned, but only to those who are ready, and also to live this newfound life to the fullest. *Kenneth, St. Clairsville, OH*

THROUGH WORD OF MOUTH from another inmate who seen APO somewhere inferred grace for prisoners. My brother, who's a serious traveler, has a high opinion of Mr. Steiner's mystical teachings. I would like to know a piece of the puzzle of the ancient wisdom that has been oppressed by the priests of modern religion. *Waldo, Florida City, FL*

I HOPE TO GAIN insight about the path I'm on, and to satisfy my curiosity about the: who, what, where, and why and how I play my part in this grand scheme of things. *Michael, Lawton, OK*

I WOULD LIKE TO BE more in tune with me, all of me, so that I can become a better person to myself and others, and to be able to really help others with what I've learned as well as to heal them. *Vandrix, Huntsville, TX*

I AM VERY THANKFUL to have received the information of anthroposophy. Not ever being introduced to these subjects before, it really has presented itself as a relief that I feel is of great importance to being. I don't know if you know how it feels to feel a part of nothing, apart from everything and have no one to relate to but still hold on to an inner spark of some unknown or undiscovered significance. I hope to gain insight, clarity and purpose. Insight and answers that may explain some of the spiritual phenomena that I've experienced as a child. *Jimmy, Winnfield, LA*

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS to life's many questions. Knowing there is a deeper meaning to life, yet not knowing what. *Richard, Raiford, FL*

I'M SEARCHING FOR the right way in life and what's to come in the afterlife or after death. Fulfillment in my search for the real meaning of life (and life's purpose) and to transform myself from being an inmate to a human being. *Dean, Springfield, MO*

I HOPE TO GAIN what I've been searching for over the years, and that is knowledge on man's destiny, life and possible rebirth. Most importantly, I hope to gain what I believe "anthroposophical" means--the study of man, or knowledge of mankind. Why

were we born, why we're here, and what comes next. More on point, I hope to understand myself and attune my mentality to a higher frequency, that of course, among other things.

Brenton, Beeville, TX

THE JOURNEY OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH is what I am looking for. I hope to gain a better awareness of myself, the world in general, and raise my spirit to new heights. *Corey, Delano, CA*

HOPING FOR A SENSE of deeper focus and discovery of a path and way of living through a new perspective that could increase my enlightenment. *Taireef, Daytona Beach, FL*

THE INNER MAN that I'm learning to let guide me. Understanding of my nature and how to overcome my false nature or animal nature. I'm truly looking for a spiritual teacher that could mentor with me and help to guide me on my way to the higher aeons or worlds. In other words, spirit overcoming matter.

Sean, Navasota, TX

I HOPE TO GAIN patience in the face of adversity, wisdom, maturity, and more knowledge of myself and the universe around me. *Curtis, Lebanon, OH*

I WANT TO FEED myself and inner self spirit, knowledge and everything I can or my mind can accept, and I want to know everything about our existence. All the wonderful things I can learn and the true knowledge you can provide to me through your books. Because I know some about the Bible, good and evil, and I know there's a lot more humanity doesn't know about, and I want my spirit to grow and reach his highest potential by feeding it with knowledge. *Juan, Kenedy, TX*

KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM, UNDERSTANDING. I want to learn about the knowledge of self and the hidden entities around me and secret orders. *Donyel, McAlester, OK*

LOOKING FOR MASTERY over self to the point that I operate at my highest potential. In this way I feel I will do the highest service to humanity--even if humanity hasn't served me well. Society would probably be a better word here. *Charles, Live Oak, FL*

I LIKE TO READ in search of my soul's fulfillment. I personally hope to gain a sense of my purpose and more tools for my toolbox. *Brandon-Christopher, Leavittsburg, OH*

MY BEING, MY LONGING to understand my destiny. Several times death sought me but the Almighty allowed me to survive. I have dreams and visions in which I cannot interpret. *Adrian, Rossharon, TX*

I HOPE TO FIND something lost to me, I'm not quite sure how to explain it. At this point in my life, enlightenment is all that matters. I believe in my past lives, this path was apparent as well. There is truth in most all faith/sciences, I call it tangible spirituality. I seek astral projection, higher worlds. *Ken, Milton, FL*

SELF AWAKENINGS

cont. from pg 9

Lesson 21: Introduction to Biography Work

This lesson was very impactful for me. It revived old emotional wounds, especially those from my childhood. At the same time, for more than three days, I struggled mentally and emotionally with my conflicting feelings, to not lose control of myself. I took control by taking only two meals a day and acted as if I was on autopilot to resist a force of depression, unhappiness, madness, discontent, etc. In the middle of this conflicted state, I had a dream: I was walking along a dirt road and I came to a place beside the road where there was a huge boulder. With great effort I lifted one side, and below it fled various kinds of little creatures; rats, tarantulas, bats, snakes, and other uglies. When I awoke, I thought I could understand its meaning. The other night I started to cry, silently, because all of the suffering I caused to many, including members of my own family. It tormented me without mercy. The worst of it all was I did it in the name of my religious fanaticism. I know I have a lot of work to do for my own good, and for the good of those I hurt, as soon as possible. I will be grateful for the rest of my life for the goodness that Anthroposophy, Edu-CareDo, and APO did for me, to teach me how to put me face-to-face with myself. Never before had I thought about a biography shown to me in this lesson. *Eric, Palestine, TX*



The Ancient Mysteries

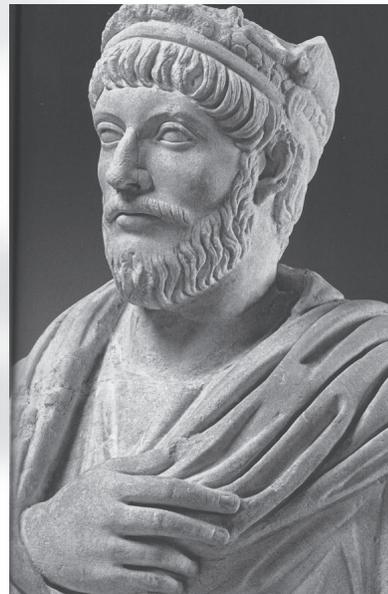
cont. from pg 1

Our story now leaps forward to the time when Christianity was spreading. Apostles traveled to different lands, spreading the news that the aim of each local Mystery had been fulfilled. Each Mystery Center had taught that humankind was losing its connection with the Divine and thereby slipping into decadence, but that a god was coming who would be able to change this descent into an ascent. In the past, a Mystery Center took its initiates back in time to experience when there was interactions with their Folk Spirit and with other beings of the heavens, but this ability had been fading for hundreds of years. Now, through the deed of Christ, through a god becoming man and going through death, the Son of Man had shown how each human may ascend. Although the leaders of the Mystery Centers could look upon these apostles and see that they were speaking the truth, the people were not always so perceptive. For example, when Paul came to Ephesus, whose Mystery Center and its Temple of Artemis had been one of the seven wonders of the world, a riot broke out. The local craftsmen made a good living selling small statues and other images of Artemis; they feared Paul's message would mean that their business would be doomed.ⁱⁱⁱ

When Christianity arrived, the Mystery Centers were still prevalent, beloved, but fading away. Early Christians believed that Christ was a God who entered the body of Jesus at baptism and remained therein for three years as Christ-Jesus. The Mystery of Christ was seen as the most important Mystery, when a God became a human, thereby giving humanity a path forward—not a path back to the divine, but forward to become divine. Early Christians believed that Christ-Jesus was the fulfillment of the ancient Mysteries, and that they could indeed fade away as the new Mysteries had begun, as exemplified by the initiation of Saul on the road to Damascus (Saul changes his name to Paul after his initiation). Aspects of a local religion carried out by its respected high priests—presiding over sacrifices, ritual meals, ritual purifications, and initiations in secrecy—became totally changed by Christianity. This led to the persecution of Christians because the Roman establishment saw Christianity as subversive to its prevailing traditions and its respected Mysteries.

When Constantine ordered Christianity to become an accepted religion in Rome, there were already many forms of Christianity being practiced. Constantine ordered the bishops within the empire to get together and come up with one system of Christian beliefs, as later expressed in the Nicene Creed. Christians felt that their way was the new way that led out of the decline of humanity, and they looked upon the ancient Mysteries as the old way. Christianity wanted to break free of the old, to be a totally new spiritual path with its own initiation process. The old was deemed to be elitist while the new upheld equality; the old deemed bloodline important while the new deemed the character of one's soul to be important. All the teachers of Plato and Aristotle came to be looked upon with suspicion, and these teachers not only felt unwanted, they feared for their lives. Most fled and found their way to Baghdad where the great learning Centers had already been established by King Shapur of Persia. When Islam came, these universities remained, and even more opened. The Muslims welcomed these teachers and they flourished together.

Some have tried to revive the Mysteries in the west, as nothing with spirit really dies. One of these individuals was Julian, who became a beloved Roman Emperor. Julian had been raised as an Arian Christian (a so-called heretical branch), but he had witnessed Christians killing his own family for power. In 354, Julian wrote a treatise, *Against the Galileans*, in which he states that Christians were fanatics and cheerfully massacred heretics, and in contrast, the Greeks were mild and forbearing; they were superior in wisdom and intelligence. He contended that Christianity had achieved little or nothing in the fields of science, astronomy, arithmetic, and music. Julian felt that the achievements of Plato, Socrates, Aristides, Thales, Lycurgus, Agesilaus and Archedemus, the Sibyls, the Delphic Oracle, and the pagan Mysteries surpassed anything that Christianity had to offer, so Julian tried to restore to the empire the Ancient Mysteries by promulgating an edict to guarantee freedom of religion. This edict proclaimed that all religions were equal before the law, and that the Roman Empire had to return to its original religious eclecticism, according to which the Roman state did not impose and religion on its provinces. However, while on campaign in Persia, seeking a Mithraic initiation, Christian fanatics realized "it was easy to arrange for the thrust of the Persian spear which caused Julian's death."^{iv}



Julian the Apostate, 4th century, CE.

In opposition to this movement, a few years after Julian came Emperor Theodosius. From 379 to 395, he set out to totally destroy the remaining Mystery and pagan learning centers within Roman rule, believing that the old Mysteries worked against Christianity. From this time through Emperor Justinian's reign from 527 to 565, soldiers and mobs destroyed Mystery Centers, books, shrines, and the people associated with them. To survive, the Mysteries went underground only to surface from time to time in Christian groups such as the Bogomils and the Cathars, as well as the warrior-monks, the Knights Templar. Such groups had secret initiation ceremonies and people could recognize something different, something noble about them.

Now let's jump ahead to the beginning of the Middle Ages, when Charlemagne was building the Holy Roman Empire in the 9th century. In this era, Spain enjoyed a cultural and educational richness, and Córdoba was considered second only to Baghdad as a city of learning and cultural wealth. This was the golden age of Islam that had spread rapidly from the Arabian Peninsula across Northern Africa and into Spain. Charlemagne wanted to build a worthy kingdom for the Franks and, recognizing that Baghdad was a rival of Córdoba, Charlemagne traveled there in 797 to seek assistance from its Caliph, Harun al Rashid, in building the cultural life of his new kingdom. The two enjoyed each other and exchanged gifts; Charlemagne received an elephant, a mechanical clock, teachers for new learning centers, and the keys to the Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Upon his return Charlemagne set the teachers to work at new schools set up in every district in his empire, where the wisdom of the ancient Mysteries could begin to flow once again, albeit still underground.

Although the ancient Mysteries have disappeared in the outer world, they will always be with us somewhere, streaming within our souls. The life of the Mysteries in one's soul can be a guiding light for one who seeks the Truth, for one who knows that the Truth is found in the spiritual world. Now has come the time for the New Mysteries, for the awakening of the soul to higher levels of consciousness. Science has led to vast knowledge of the physical world but now the New Mysteries point to the next frontier, namely the realm of Life. Anthroposophy can be seen as the latest flowering of the ancient Mysteries as it offers spiritual science as a means to understand and work with the forces of Life.

iii Acts 19:23-41.

iv Steiner, *Spiritual Wisdom in the Early Christian Centuries*



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Meditative Verse

EVENING-

*In the Beginning was
The Word
And the Word was with God
And a God was the Word.
May it dwell in thy heart
In the heart of thy being—
In thine 'I'.*

MORNING-

*In thine 'I'
In the heart of the being
There lives the Word,
The Spirit-Word
And the Word was with God
And a God was the Word.
In the Beginning was the Word.*

Rudolf Steiner